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ABSTRACT

A study examined the potential effects on journalism management of the recent influx of women into journalism schools. In addition, the study sought to predict the career progress of women currently in journalism schools to the editorial ranks by measuring feminine traits (the limited aspirations of women and feminine communication patterns) that are often thought to be barriers to career advancement. One hundred eighty journalism students (both male and female) completed questionnaires that included a sex role inventory, an inventory of communication style, and two questions designed to elicit expressions of career aspirations. Analysis of data involved comparing, by sex, mean scores on the variables of masculine socialization, feminine socialization, willingness to face conflict, and career aspirations. The results showed that masculine socialization was positively related to high aspirations and to a forceful communication style, while feminine socialization was negatively related to factors associated with career success. The results also showed that male and female journalism students had more similarities than differences and that the means for masculine socialization were nearly identical for the two groups. These findings led to the prediction that more women will move into management jobs in journalism in this decade. (FL)

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Some Effects of Sex-Role Socialization on Women Entering Journalism Careers

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Some Effects of Sex-Role Socialization
on Women Entering Journalism Careers

The present study was designed to examine potential effects on journalism management of the recent influx of women students into schools of journalism. The study attempts to predict career progress of women currently in journalism schools to editorial ranks by measuring feminine attitudes and traits thought to be barriers to career advancement.

In 1977, journalism schools nationwide were educating more women than men for the first time ever (Peterson, 1979). Enrollment figures at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Journalism indicate that each year since that time, more women and fewer men have selected journalism as a major field of study. At the date of this writing, women constitute some 68 percent of the enrollment at the UNC-CH School of Journalism, up more than 10 percent from 1979 and up nearly 20 percent from 1977. Indications are that this is a national trend in journalism education.

Women journalism students enter a field traditionally controlled by men. A 1980 report of the American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE) states that although 40 percent of working journalists were women in that year, men held 93 percent of editorial positions (Jurney, 1980). Management of the activities of others, with authority to make decisions and to set policy, is the usual desired outcome of the career process (Hennig and Jardim, 1977). Career progress in journalism may be different from that in other fields since an optional path--that of becoming a star reporter--is available as an alternative to management. However, for the purposes of this research, the move to editorial positions was viewed as a more typical

career strategy because both salary structure and newsroom status structures appear to revere editorial power. This view of career progress may be increasingly evident as newspapers continue the trend to big ownership, becoming more and more like other businesses. At any rate, the tradition of male dominance of journalism management posts may be challenged by this wave of women entering journalism, particularly considering changes in the lifestyles of women over the past 10 years.

Studies of sex differences, however, suggest that several ramifications of feminine socialization--i.e., growing up female in modern Western culture--may function to keep women from success in traditionally male ranks. Among these factors are low achievement motivation (Hennig and Jardim, 1977; Zytowski, 1969); fear of success (Horner, 1972); the tradition of male dominance in Western culture (Epstein, 1975; Hennig and Jardim, 1977); and feminine communication patterns (Lakoff, 1975). Considering these research findings, it may be expected that students who do not have to cope with these barriers--those with masculine characteristics, most of whom are male--will have less difficulty proceeding through careers to management status. The great number of women in journalism school at the present time, therefore, does not ensure that women will be represented in similar proportion at decisionmaking posts in several years.

Two of the factors found to function as barriers to career success for women have been selected for study here: (1) the limited aspirations of women and (2) feminine communication patterns.

Aspirations have been found to be predictors of performance in many settings (Kausler, 1959; Worrell, 1959); and sex differences have been found in aspiration levels. Regardless of ability level, women typically aspire to less than men and then perform in accordance with those lower aspirations (Ryan and Pryor, 1976; Watley, 1969).

Analysis of the communication styles of women reveals a general lack of willingness to engage in conflict or other kinds of direct confrontation (Baird, 1976; Lakoff, 1975; Strodtbeck and Mann, 1956). This reticence is viewed as a characteristic of subordination and is a major difference between male and female communication patterns. The lack of force in women's language functions in the work place as an indication to male supervisors that women are different from the male majority at the top, and therefore less qualified than men for membership in management ranks (Epstein, 1975; Lakoff, 1975).

The present study hypothesizes that feminine socialization is negatively related to high career aspirations and to forceful communication style, and therefore negatively related to career success. Conversely, the study proposes that masculine socialization is highly correlated with heightened aspriations and forceful communication style, which are theoretically beneficial to career success.

In examining these hypotheses, the study sought to establish links between sex-role socialization and these predictors of career success, then to examine the masculine and feminine characteristics of current journalism students in an effort to predict patterns of career progress.

Method

In order to test these hypotheses, research materials were completed by 180 students (57 men and 123 women) in the UNC-CH School of Journalism in February 1980. This sample represented nearly half of the school's 1980 enrollment, which was estimated to be 350-375 students. Some 300 questionnaires were distributed by 15 professors to students in their largest classes. Some allowed class time for responding, while others instructed students to return

the completed questionnaires at the next class session. All questionnaires were completed between Feb. 1 and Feb. 29, 1980.

The questionnaire, which students were told would examine changing patterns of enrollment in the school, included, among other measures, an abbreviated form of the Bem Sex-Role Inventory. This form, which retained 20 of the 60 original Bem descriptors, yielded for each student scores for both masculine and feminine socialization.

The questionnaire also contained an inventory of communication style adapted from Fitzpatrick (1977). Factor analysis of the inventory yielded a factor which accounted for 45 percent of factor variance and which appeared to measure willingness to engage in conflict--a major difference in male and female communication styles. An index was formed for each respondent by totaling self-ratings on the three items which were the factor's principal components: willingness to engage in conflict, to disagree openly and to express anger to friends and co-workers. The resulting score was labeled "willingness to confront."

Two open-ended questions were included to solicit expressions of career aspiration. The specific questions were "What do you expect to be doing five to ten years from now?" and "If what you plan to be doing five to ten years from now includes work outside the home, please describe the job(s) you expect to have." Answers were coded by assigning points. One point was assigned an answer for naming a desired field of employment; one point for naming a desired job; another point was given if that job were a management job, and a point was awarded if further specific details were given such as the size or location of a desired job. Points were totaled to form an index of career aspiration for each respondent.

Analysis of the data included comparing, by sex, mean scores on the four study variables--masculine socialization, feminine socialization,

willingness to confront and career aspiration. Also, zero-order correlation coefficients were calculated between masculine socialization and career aspiration and willingness to confront, and then between feminine socialization and the two career predictors.

Results and Discussion

Analysis of the survey data suggests that the study hypotheses are tenable: that masculine socialization is positively related to high aspirations and to a forceful mode of communication, while feminine socialization is negatively related to these factors associated with career success. Results also indicate that while masculine socialization is not strongly associated with gender, feminine socialization is clearly linked to biological sex.

Summary statistics presented in Table 1 show that male and female journalism students in the sample have far more similarities than differences. Means for masculine socialization are nearly identical for the two groups, with women, in fact, scoring slightly higher on that variable. Only one marked difference can be noted in these statistics: Women are higher in feminine socialization, a difference which is dramatized when ranges for the two sexes are compared. The lowest degree of feminine socialization measured for women is 10 points higher than the lowest for men--28 as compared to 18, a difference which comprises nearly one-fourth of the total range.

This great degree of feminine socialization among women in the study does not appear to influence their career aspirations or willingness to confront. Table 1 shows that despite their high degree of femininity, women in the present study measure slightly higher in both dependent variables than do men. This would imply that these women are equally likely to make career progress to management jobs as are the men in the study.

The zero-order correlations presented in Table 2 support the hypothesis that masculine socialization is a necessary condition for aspiring to careers and for confronting others when communicating. For women, masculine socialization is significantly and positively related to career aspiration and willingness to confront. For men, masculine socialization is significantly related to willingness to confront but not to career aspiration, suggesting that perhaps gender (simply being male) is a sufficient condition for voicing career goals. This would be consistent with the Western tradition of men being the sex expected to work all their lives. Aspirations for men, then, may not be so much a product of socialization as a response to the circumstance of being male.

The correlations in Table 2 also support the hypothesis that feminine socialization is negatively related to career aspiration and to willingness to confront. While the only significant correlation is between femininity and willingness to confront, and then only for women, all correlations are negative between feminine socialization and the two dependent variables.

The partial correlation coefficients shown in Table 3 closely parallel the zero-order statistics, perhaps because there is little or no relationship (-.013) between the dependent variables which are alternately used as controls. This lack of correspondence between career aspiration and willingness to confront, when both appear to be strongly related to the sex-role socialization variables, is a puzzling aspect of the present study which is not explained by analysis by sex.

In Figures 1 and 2, path models with partial correlation coefficients illustrate relationships between the independent and dependent variables for men, for women and for the total sample group. These illustrations

graphically demonstrate study findings that regardless of sex, masculinity is positively related and femininity negatively related to these two components of career success.

It cannot be determined at this time how the high degree of masculine socialization characteristic of these women, coupled with a high degree of feminine socialization and with the fact of gender, will ultimately influence their career progress. Feminine socialization and biological femaleness will be additional factors in their careers—factors which will not influence men in the study as they progress toward career goals. However, the following predictions may be posed, based on results of the present study:

Chiefly by virtue of their increasing numbers, more women will move into management jobs in journalism in the next 10 years. Promotions are made typically from pools of available candidates, and judging from journalism school populations, pools of editorial candidates will contain an increasing number of women over the next serveral years. That more women will be offered management jobs is likely; but based on high measures of feminine socialization found in the study, it may also be predicted that some women will not accept management positions, while others will accept them and then move on because of difficulties on the job.

At any rate, some increase in the number of women in editorial jobs is likely to occur given that young women in the sample demonstrated a high degree of masculine socialization, coupled with well-articulated career aspirations and willingness to confront others directly when communicating. This movement may also be facilitated by changes in the roles of women in society, changes in childbearing patterns and measures to promote equal opportunity and affirmative action in employment.

Men will continue to dominate management ranks in journalism for the near future because of their present near-total dominance of those ranks and because of the barriers shown to exist for women in male-dominated professions. These barriers are likely to affect many aspiring women journalists as they continue to reflect feminine socialization in attributes discounted by men who award promotions. Therefore, women who do advance probably will be those with exceptional talents and/or personalities--and will likely be those with low measures of feminine socialization.

The number of women in journalism management is likely to continue to increase gradually over a period of many years, given the positive effects of women role models on other women and the hypothesized effects of a declining male monopoly on upper-level jobs--that is, if women were to be substantially represented in journalism management, such negative effects as stereotyping and male bonding would cease to function as strongly (Baird and Bradley, 1979; Hennig and Jardim, 1977). As exceptional women move into management ranks, breaking down the tradition of male dominance, more equal opportunities will exist among men and women for career progress at all levels.

Questions of the ultimate effects of sex-role socialization on careers posed throughout this report may not be answered until these young men and women have undertaken careers. Therefore, a follow-up study of this same sample group is recommended for some time in the years 1985-1990 to determine what effect the variables examined here actually have had on careers.

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Table 1. Summary statistics (means, standard deviations and ranges) for all variables.

Variable		Men (n=57)	Women (n=123)	Total (N=180)
Masculine Socialization	mean	37.23	37.87	37.69
	SDV	4.56	5.39	5.14
	range	24-49	24-49	24-49
Feminine Socialization	mean	35.47	38.52	37.56
	SDV	5.26	4.41	4.89
	range	18-44	28-48	18-48
Career Aspiration	mean	2.05	2.12	2.10
	SDV	1.26	.96	1.06
	range	0-4	0-4	0-4
Willingness to Confront	mean	12.46	13.29	13.02
	SDV	4.12	3.10	3.46
	range	8-20	4-20	4-20

Table 2. Zero-order correlations among all variables for men, for women and for the total sample group.

Variables	Masculine Socialization			Feminine Socialization			Career Aspiration		
	Men (n=57)	Women (n=123)	Total (N=180)	Men (n=57)	Women (n=123)	Total (N=180)	Men (n=57)	Women (n=123)	Total (N=180)
Masculine Socialization									
Feminine Socialization	.177	-.075	.022						
Career Aspiration	.150	.245*	.210*	-.125	-.110	-.098			
Willingness to confront	.372*	.209*	.264*	-.052	-.163*	-.078	.013	-.040	-.013

*p .05

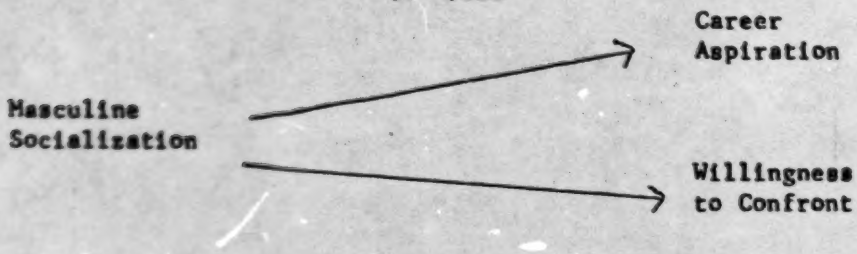
Table 3. Partial correlation coefficients between sex-role s.. s cialization variables (masculine, feminine) controlling for career aspiration and willingness to confront.

Variables	Masculine Socialization			Feminine Socialization		
	Men (n=57)	Women (n=123)	Total (N=180)	Men (n=57)	Women (n=123)	Total (N=180)
Career Aspiration	.157	.256*	.221*	-.125	-.111	-.100
Willingness to Confront	.375*	.226*	.272*	-.050	-.169*	-.079

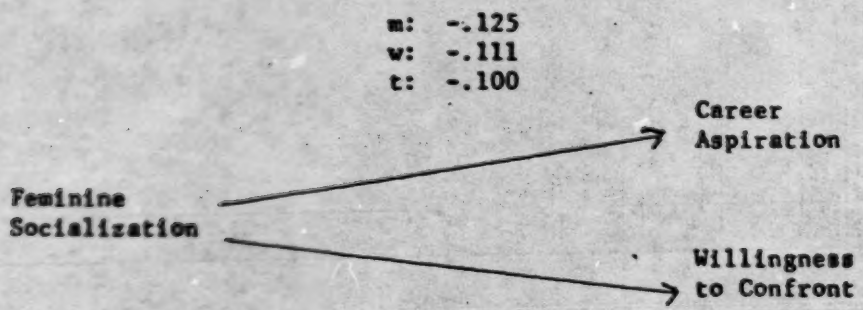
*p .05

NOTE: Partial correlation coefficients with the career aspiration variable were calculated controlling for the variable willingness to confront and vice versa.

Figures 1 and 2. Models for the present study with path coefficients (determined by calculating partial correlations) for men, for women and for the total sample group.



N=180
*p .05



m = men (n = 57)
w = women (n = 123)
t = total (N = 180)
*p .05